

Summary

This Planning Analysis/Environmental Assessment (PA/EA) analyzes alternatives and the Proposed Action for future management of Meadowood Farm on the Mason Neck Peninsula in Fairfax County, Virginia. The land area covered by this PA/EA can be found on Map 1 in Appendix A.

Issues

Three issues were identified during the public scoping process: 1) What is the desired level of equine use that meets the needs and demands of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the public, while sustaining a healthy ecosystem (i.e., plants, animals, soils, and water); 2) What types and to what extent can competing recreational uses be allowed while preserving the recreational experiences of each visitor; and 3) What intensity (level) of recreational use would meet the needs and demands of the BLM and the public, while sustaining a healthy ecosystem (i.e., air, plants, animals, soils, and water)?

Alternatives

For clarification in this Summary, the Proposed Action, which is a modified Alternative 3 (Preferred Alternative in the Draft PA/EA), is presented first and is followed by Alternatives 1, 2, and 4. In the body of the document, a modified Alternative 3 appears in the same order it appeared in the draft document, but is labeled the Proposed Action.

Proposed Action

Management Objective: Management of natural and cultural resources would be balanced with recreation, environmental education and equine use of Meadowood Farm. Boarding of private horses would be allowed. The Bureau's Wild Horse and Burro (WH&B) program, partnerships and horse-related programs, and a WH&B holding facility would be developed. The goals and objectives of these programs and activities would be balanced with the goals and objectives of the natural and cultural resource management programs. Environmental education programs would be developed and an environmental education center would be constructed. Recreational motorized passenger vehicles use would not be allowed. Recreational non-motorized passenger vehicle use and motorized hobby activities (see glossary) would be allowed, however, this use would be restricted to designated areas and times for visitor safety and to minimize potential use conflicts. Wildlife, vegetation, and riparian/wetland management would focus on species diversity, quality, protection and enhancement in balance with visitor use activities.

Alternative #1

Management Objective: Management of Meadowood Farm would be a continuation of existing management practices and activities established after the property was acquired by the BLM on October 18, 2001. Boarding of domestic private horses would continue and a hay

storage shelter would be constructed. The property would not be available to support the Bureau's WH&B program and horse-related partnerships. Existing facilities at Meadowood Farm would be available to boarders for trail riding or other equestrian activities on a day-use basis only. The property would remain closed to the general public. Recreational motorized and non-motorized passenger vehicles use would not be allowed, nor would the area be available for motorized hobby activities. Natural resource management activities would be limited to protection, and natural progression would occur through vegetative successional stages.

Alternative #2

Management Objective: Management for protection and enhancement of natural and cultural resources would guide recreational and equine use of Meadowood Farm. Boarding of private horses would be phased out. The Bureau's WH&B program, partnerships, and horse-related programs would be initiated. Day-use recreation and environmental education programs and activities would be offered; however, natural resource and cultural resource management goals and objectives would take precedence over these activities. Recreational motorized and non-motorized passenger vehicle use, and motorized hobby activities, would not be allowed.

Alternative #4

Management Objective: Management of recreation and environmental education programs and activities would guide natural and cultural resources management goals and objectives on Meadowood Farm. Boarding of private horses would continue. The Bureau's WH&B program, partnerships, and horse-related programs would be initiated and would include development of a WH&B holding facility. Recreation and environmental education programs and activities would be offered and would include construction of an environmental education center. Recreational motorized and non-motorized passenger vehicle use, and motorized hobby activities would be allowed, however, this use would be regulated and restricted to designated areas and times for visitor safety and to minimize potential conflicts. Wildlife, vegetation and riparian/wetland management would focus on protection and maintenance of existing resources.